1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

blackened with the smoke of years, upon which are spread the faggots of resinous fir-wood used for kindling the fire. Above this again is a wooden framework fixed on to the beams of the house, upon which all sorts of odds and ends are kept. Around the fire are to be seen small wooden stools, upon which the members of the household sit. Up-to-date Khasis have cane chairs, but the women of the family, true to the conservative instincts of the sex, prefer the humble stool to sit upon. Well-to-do Khasis nowadays have, in addition to the ordinary cooking vessels made of iron and earthenware, a number of brass utensils. The writer has seen in a Khasi house in Mawkhar brass drinking vessels of the pattern used in Orissa, of the description used in Manipur, and of the kind which is in vogue in Sylhet. The ordinary cultivator, however, uses a waterpot made from a gourd hollowed out for keeping water and liquor in, and drinks from a bamboo cylinder. Plates, or more properly speaking dishes, are of several kinds in the houses of the rich, the two larger ones being styled *ka pliang kynthei* (female) and *ka pliang shynrang* (male). Needless to say, the first mentioned is a larger utensil than the latter. The ordinary waterpots, *u khiew phiang kynthei* and *u khiew phiang shynrang*, are made of brass, the former being a size larger and having a wider mouth than the latter. The pot for cooking vegetables is made of iron. Another utensil is made of earthenware; this is the ordinary cooking pot used in the houses of the poor. Brass spoons of different sizes are used for stirring the contents of the different cooking utensils, also a wooden spoon.

In the sleeping-rooms of the well-to-do there are wooden beds with mattresses and sheets and pillows, clothes being hung upon clothes-racks, which in one house visited were of the same pattern as the English "towel horse." The ordinary cultivator and his wife sleep on mats made of plaited bamboo, which are spread on the bare boards of the house. There are various kinds of mats to be met with in the Khasi houses made of plaited cane, of a kind of reed, and of plaited bamboo. The best kind of mat is prepared from cane. In all Khasi houses are to be seen *ki knup*, or rain shields, of different sizes and sometimes of somewhat different shapes. The large

must also be sought out and hired at the markets. 443

3. The Customs of the Market

a) The Preparation for Market. The sellers of both sexes, normally carry their wares to the market themselves. They form smaller or larger groups and travel together. The wares are carried on their backs. The burden is packed according to its bulk or content. Larger objects, such as bamboo poles, beams, sugar cane, grass, and mats are carried without any covering by means of a forehead band plaited of reed grass (u'star). Smaller items, such as salt or potatoes, are packed in sacks; others such as betel nuts, pepper leaves, fruit, vegetables, etc. are carried in baskets made of bamboo. The baskets are either pointed baskets which are round at the top or square baskets, which narrow to a point at the bottom but still are four feet long in size. The latter baskets are usually made with a cover, which, like the basket itself, is plaited and almost waterproof, so that flour or salt can be transported in them even during the rainy season. A round or oval object shaped like a shield, which in case of need is used as an umbrella (ka trap) and which is plaited out of bamboo, is inserted between the back and the burden (jingkit). On the one hand this object has the purpose of ameliorating the pressure of the burden and on the other hand it is pulled out in rainy weather to serve as an umbrella when it is held up against the rain by hand.

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With regard to the weight which the Khasi carry to market, the men carry about 100 and more pounds while the women seldom 482

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G. Khasi women of Kongton village.

H. Young Khasi women of Shella village.

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[P. 96-B]

children, but Christian influence has eradicated or driven underground the consumption by women and children. **Industrial arts.** The only industrial arts traditionally practiced in all households were a rudimentary carpentry and a simple utilitarian basketry. Other arts were few, and were practiced as village specialties: the washing and smelting of iron ore and the forging of hoes, daos, knives, swords, and cooking pots (upland Khasis); the spinning of cotton thread (Mynso village, Jaintia); the dyeing of cotton thread and the weaving of cloth (Jaintias, Bhois, Lyngngams, Wars); the spinning and weaving of Eri silk (Khyrwang and Nongtung villages, Bhoi and Jaintia); and the hand manufacture, without wheel, of painted earthenware pots (Larnai village, Jaintia). Ironworking and the production of cotton goods have nearly died out through the competition of machine-made goods. Carpentry has greatly improved. An innovation of major importance is the sewing and tailoring, on sewing machines, of ready-made garments for both sexes. [Cf. Darrah 1896; C., W. 1832.] **Trade.** Khasi villages normally contain a number of household shops operated by women. Every Khasi also lives within walking distance of several village markets that are held on successive days of the eight-day week. The limits of market intercourse for the members of any particular village can be roughly distinguished by their naming the days of their week, which are called after the active markets. The exception is the huge market at Shillong, much of which is active daily, and which serves as a magnet for Khasis from all over the hills. The traditional barter has given way to currency in all markets. The small ones contain at least some local farm produce, plus other essentials like betel nut, and the food and tea stalls which serve as centers of social intercourse. The big markets contain not only regional produce and manufactures but also products from distant parts of the hills, brought for sale by traveling middlemen. There is also substantial trade, from the hills to the valleys, in potatoes, pears, hides, lac, cotton, caoutchouc, the wood of the sal tree, Eri silk thread, limestone, coal, ivory, bay leaf, betel nut, pan leaves, bananas, sugar cane, oranges, til, turmeric, and chilies. From the plains to the hills, there is trade in dried fish, paddy rice, salt, cooking oil, kerosene, matches, tea, sugar, wheat flour, machine-made cloth, shoes, metal pots, crockery, porcelain objects, coral beads, silver, and gold. Markets are important not only as economic institutions but also as centers for recreation (including archery competitions), courtship, reaffirmation of kinship ties with distant relatives, and the dissemination of information of all kinds. [Cf. Stegmiller 1924a.] **Division of labor.** Men do the heavy work, such as clearing and burning the swidden fields, caring for cattle and goats and driving them to market, butchering and selling large cuts of beef and pork, carpentry and mining, and driving and laboring on motor vehicles. They also tailor men's

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243 on from October to December. For millets the seed is sown in April-May and reaped about six months later. Maize is usually sown in
244 April-May and ripens in August - September. For potato, generally three crops are raised in the district ; the first is sown in December-January and harvested in April-May, the second is sown in February-March and is gathered in June-July and the third is sown in July-August and is harvested in November-December.

245 For oranges and betelnut the orchards are cleared of weeds twice a year. Harvesting of orange takes place from October to January. Betelnut ripens at the beginning of the year and are collected between February and May.

241 2.6.3 **Agricultural implements.**—The usual agricultural implements are a hoe, a sickle, three or four kinds of doas, a harrow, a crowbar which is used for the construction of irrigation channels, 'sierras' and winnowing baskets. Bullock drawn plough is used in wet paddy cultivation in parts of Jowai subdivision and in Bhoi area and resembles the one in use in the plains of the State.

2. 6. 4. **General cultural practices.**—The cultivators mostly adhere to their indigenous practices of cultivation. Rotation of crops is not widely used. Cultivation of rice is usually done by broadcasting the seeds though transplanting is also in vogue in some areas. Mixed cropping is widely practised. Cultivation by making terraces in the hill slopes is gaining popularity in the district.

433 326 323 285 306 286 171 654 231 2.7 **Cottage Industries.**—Cottage Industries, it appears, have not found very great favour among the people of the district. A few families here and there manufacture iron implements, earthenware, pottery, baskets, mats and jewellery. In striking contrast with other districts weaving of cotton clothes is rare among the Khasis. The Mikirs in Bhoi area and in areas adjoining North Cachar and Mikir Hills practice it only for their domestic consumption. At present, the Government is trying to popularise weaving in the district and this has been welcomed by the Khasis. Among other cottage industries production of eri cocoon in the northern part of the district adjoining Kamrup district and bee keeping throughout the district are worth mentioning.

142 147 441 563 2.8 **The People.**—The Khasis and Jaintias are a short sturdy race distinct from the neighbouring hill tribes. By nature they are hardy and laborious and in respect of manual labour, they are free from any inhibition. Side by side with the Khasis live the Mikirs, Garos and Nepalis who form respectively 7.32 percent, 3.38 percent and 3·27 per cent of the total rural population. Besides, there are plains people who are mainly concentrated in the town of Shillong. In the marketing centres of the border area there are a large number of Bengali Hindus who dominate the bulk of the trade in the border areas.

241 433 461 2.9 **Occupation.**—The greater portion of the population of the district subsists on cultivation. More than 75 percent of the rural households are predominantly agricultural. The industrious Khasi agriculturists males and females have a high regard for hard labour